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## **Dr. Ambedkar- Social savior**

India has produced many social and political thinker during long and chequered history, among whom Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar ranks one of the most prominent. His personal and bitter social experiences, progressive and liberal Western education, extensive reading and research, and contact with the masses gave him the required perspective, theoretical framework, depth, and dimension for understanding and analyzing any problem, particularly the social problems of India. Dr. Ambedkar was a rare combination of a political leader, legal luminary, constitutional expert, and erudite scholar and champion of the oppressed masses, whose memory will never fade from the minds of the masses.



Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born to a low-income family in a Hindu 'untouchable' community called Mahar. He was born on 14 April 1891 at Mhow in Central India (now Madhya Pradesh), where his father was in military service. The Ambedkar's originally came from the Konkan region of Ratnagiri District in the present Maharashtra state. Bhimrao was hardly two years old when his father retired from service. His mother died when he was only about six. Bhimrao got his early education in the environment of Bombay. Since his school days, he realized with intense shock what it was to be an 'untouchable' in India. His marriage occurred after his Matriculation in an open market shed with Ramabai. He grew up in a

ghetto. With benevolent help from the Maharaja of Baroda, he passed his B.A. in 1912. His father died early the next year.

Dr. Ambedkar's self-development started with his selection by the Maharaja of Baroda for higher studies in America in 1913, where he studied for his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. He then left for London for further studies and was admitted there to the Gray's Inn for Law and was allowed to prepare for D.Sc. at the London School of Economics. But he was called back to India by the Dewan of Baroda. Later he got his Bar-at-Law and D.Sc. degrees also. He studied for some time at Bonn University in Germany.

Dr. Ambedkar was a victim of the menacing caste system. He had suffered the worst kind of humiliation and maltreatment. All this engendered a burning hatred for the unequal social system and a spirit of revolt. He, therefore, attacked the orthodoxy of the Hindu religion through his fiery speeches and inspiring articles. On 21 March 1920, Dr. Ambedkar presided over a conference at Mangaon in Kolhapur state attended by Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur, who declared a prophetic view to those attending the meeting: "You have found your saviour in Ambedkar, who will break your shackles."

He started life as a barrister in' 1923 and became a poor man's barrister. On 24 July 1924, Dr. Ambedkar established Bahishkrit Hitkarani Sabha. He urged the 'untouchables' to fight for self-help, self-elevation, and self-respect. The people belonging to the Depressed Classes, whose interest Dr. Ambedkar was mainly espousing, were segregated and had no religious or political rights. Therefore, he wanted to devote himself to their cause and make them feel the country belonged to them. In his endeavour, he was neither supported by the Press nor had sufficient funds for the purpose. He visited the hamlets, walked through villages and towns to Stir up his people, and encouraged them to revolt. He was fighting for their social and political rights.

By 1925 Dr. Ambedkar had become a known figure and was recognized as the spokesman of the Depressed Classes. The historic Chavdar Tank incident brought him into the limelight of the civil rights movements of the 'untouchables.' He holds the meeting at Mahad on 19 and 20 March 1927. About 10,000 workers assembled there from far and near, from all districts of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Dr. Ambedkar addressed the half-clad, embarrassed but earnest men and women.

Dr. Ambedkar's principle was not to fight against the persons who created a frustrating situation for him and his fellow sufferers, as the cause of the problem was not these persons but the social philosophy which supported a social system of inequalities. His long-term response was a direct attack against the root cause. Dr. Ambedkar believed in religion but was firmly against hypocrisy in the name of religion. For him, religion is for man and not man for religion. Social ethics must judge people and their religion.

Ambedkar observed, experienced, and studied the utter deprivation, despair, and fear skilfully injected into millions of his fellow citizens by the higher caste people. He agitated about their sub-human conditions and regarded the woes and miseries of these people as a personal humiliation. Therefore, he vowed to lead them to fight for their human rights.

Dr. Ambedkar wanted social reforms not as a gesture of concession but as a matter of right. His intense desire was to create a new society by inculcating the spirit of independence and

self-realization among the 'untouchables.' In other words, he wanted them to stand on their own feet.

The Depressed Classes in the country would undoubtedly remember Dr. Ambedkar as their saviour. Still, all the Indians are, in fact, indebted to him for giving the country its constitutional framework with the fundamental human rights inserted therein. Therefore, it is incumbent on us that suitable long-term ongoing programs be chalked out during his Birth Anniversary to fulfil his dreams and perpetuate his memory and focus on his multifaceted personality by holding seminars and symposia and bringing out publications. This would surely help in bringing to light the myths about the contradictions in his personality supposedly attributed to him.

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Reference: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – The man and his message